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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/13/2016
TAGS: [UNESCO](#) [KNAR](#) [PHUM](#) [SCUL](#) [EZ](#)
SUBJECT: CZECHS SUPPORT USG POSITION ON UNESCO PRINCIPLES
RELATING TO LOOTED ART

REF: STATE 108279

Classified By: Acting Political-Economic Counselor
Karen C. Reider for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (U) Poloff met separately with the Czech MFA's UNESCO Desk Officer Karel Komarek and the Czech Ministry of Culture's General Director of International Relations (EU Affairs) Ales Grof, to discuss the draft UNESCO Principles Relating to Cultural Objects Displaced in Relation to the Second World War.

¶2. (C) Komarek and Grof said the Czechs agree that the Principles, if adopted, should be nonbinding in nature and should facilitate rather than undercut the existing framework for art restitution. The Czechs, therefore, support the USG's proposed edits to the draft Principles. Nevertheless, the Czechs predict little progress will be made at the July 19-21 intergovernmental meeting in Paris at UNESCO, because no progress has been made in the two years proceeding this meeting.

¶3. (C/NF) As a separate concern, Komarek said the Czechs oppose any claim for restitution made by Sudeten Germans (the Germans expelled from Czech lands between 1945 and 1948 pursuant to the Benes decrees). Therefore, the Czechs propose to limit the time frame covered by the Principles to the years immediately preceding and including the Second World War. The Czechs also propose to define the term "cultural objects" narrowly to ensure that "objects" such as buildings, household goods, or business property are not construed as "cultural objects" for which a claim for restitution can be made.

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